

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:
 - a) a mature form of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8;
 - b) a variant of a mature form of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, wherein any amino acid in the mature form is changed to a different amino acid, provided that no more than 15% of the amino acid residues in the sequence of the mature form are so changed;
 - c) the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8;
 - d) a variant of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, wherein any amino acid specified in the chosen sequence is changed to a different amino acid, provided that no more than 15% of the amino acid residues in the sequence are so changed; and
 - e) a variant of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, in which the residue at position 192 is Arg and a residue at any other position may be altered, or in which the residue at position 387 is Arg and a residue at any other position may be altered;
 - f) a variant of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, in which the residue at position 192 is other than Ser and in which the residue at position 387 is other than Gln;
 - g) a mature form of a polypeptide described in paragraph e) or paragraph f);
 - h) a variant of any of the polypeptides described in paragraphs e) through g) further wherein any amino acid specified in the chosen sequence is changed to a different amino acid,

provided that no more than 15% of the amino acid residues in the sequence are so changed;
and

a fragment of any of a) through h).

2. The polypeptide of claim 1 that is a naturally occurring allelic variant of the sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8.

3. The polypeptide of claim 2, wherein the variant is the translation of a single nucleotide polymorphism.

4. The polypeptide of claim 1 that is a variant polypeptide described therein, wherein any amino acid specified in the chosen sequence is changed to provide a conservative substitution.

5. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

a) a mature form of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8;

b) a variant of a mature form of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, wherein any amino acid in the mature form of the chosen sequence is changed to a different amino acid, provided that no more than 15% of the amino acid residues in the sequence of the mature form are so changed;

c) the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8;

d) a variant of the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, in which any amino acid specified in the chosen sequence is changed to a different amino acid, provided that no more than 15% of the amino acid residues in the sequence are so changed;

e) a nucleic acid fragment encoding at least a portion of a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, or any variant of said polypeptide

wherein any amino acid of the chosen sequence is changed to a different amino acid, provided that no more than 10% of the amino acid residues in the sequence are so changed; and

f) the complement of any of said nucleic acid molecules.

6. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises the nucleotide sequence of a naturally occurring allelic nucleic acid variant.

7. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5 that encodes a variant polypeptide, wherein the variant polypeptide has the polypeptide sequence of a naturally occurring polypeptide variant.

8. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises a single nucleotide polymorphism encoding said variant polypeptide.

9. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of

a) the nucleotide sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:1, 3, 4, 5, and 7;

b) a nucleotide sequence wherein one or more nucleotides in the nucleotide sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 is changed from that given by the chosen sequence to a different nucleotide provided that no more than 17% of the nucleotides are so changed;

c) a nucleic acid fragment of the sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:1, 3, 4, 5, and 7; and

d) a nucleic acid fragment wherein one or more nucleotides in the nucleotide sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 is changed from that given by the chosen sequence to a different nucleotide provided that no more than 17% of the nucleotides are so changed.

10. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5, wherein said nucleic acid molecule hybridizes under stringent conditions to the nucleotide sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:1, 3, 4, 5, and 7, or a complement of said nucleotide sequence.

11. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 5, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence in which any nucleotide specified in the coding sequence of the chosen nucleotide sequence is changed from that given by the chosen sequence to a different nucleotide provided that no more than 17% of the nucleotides in the chosen coding sequence are so changed, an isolated second polynucleotide that is a complement of the first polynucleotide, or a fragment of any of them.

12. A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

13. The vector of claim 12, further comprising a promoter operably linked to said nucleic acid molecule.

14. A cell comprising the vector of claim 12.

15. An antibody that binds immunospecifically to the polypeptide of claim 1.

16. The antibody of claim 15, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

17. The antibody of claim 15, wherein the antibody is a humanized antibody.

18. A method for determining the presence or amount of the polypeptide of claim 1 in a sample, the method comprising:

- (a) providing said sample;
- (b) introducing said sample to an antibody that binds immunospecifically to the polypeptide; and
- (c) determining the presence or amount of antibody bound to said polypeptide, thereby determining the presence or amount of polypeptide in said sample.

19. A method for determining the presence or amount of the nucleic acid molecule of claim 5 in a sample, the method comprising:

- (a) providing said sample;
 - (b) introducing said sample with a probe that binds to said nucleic acid molecule;
- and
- (c) determining the presence or amount of said probe bound to said nucleic acid molecule,

thereby determining the presence or amount of the nucleic acid molecule in said sample.

20. A method of identifying an agent that binds to the polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- (a) introducing said polypeptide with said agent; and
- (b) determining whether said agent binds to said polypeptide.

21. A method for identifying a potential therapeutic agent for use in treatment of a pathology, wherein the pathology is related to aberrant expression or aberrant physiological interactions of the polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- (a) providing a cell expressing the polypeptide of claim 1 and having a property or function ascribable to the polypeptide;
 - (b) contacting the cell with a composition comprising a candidate substance;
- and
- (c) determining whether the substance alters the property or function ascribable to the polypeptide;

whereby, if an alteration observed in the presence of the substance is not observed when the cell is contacted with a composition devoid of the substance, the substance is identified as a potential therapeutic agent.

22. A method for modulating the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising introducing a cell sample expressing the polypeptide of said claim with a compound that binds to said polypeptide in an amount sufficient to modulate the activity of the polypeptide.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said subject is a human.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said subject is a human.

28. The method of claim 15, wherein the subject is a human.

30. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

32. A kit comprising in one or more containers, the pharmaceutical composition of claim 29.

33. A kit comprising in one or more containers, the pharmaceutical composition of claim 30.

34. A kit comprising in one or more containers, the pharmaceutical composition of claim 31.

35. The use of a therapeutic in the manufacture of a medicament for treating a syndrome associated with a human disease, the disease selected from a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said therapeutic is the polypeptide of claim 1.

36. The use of a therapeutic in the manufacture of a medicament for treating a syndrome associated with a human disease, the disease selected from a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said therapeutic is the nucleic acid of claim 5.

37. The use of a therapeutic in the manufacture of a medicament for treating a syndrome associated with a human disease, the disease selected from a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said therapeutic is the antibody of claim 15.

38. A method for screening for a modulator of activity or of latency or predisposition to a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising:

- a) administering a test compound to a test animal at increased risk for a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said test animal recombinantly expresses the polypeptide of claim 1;
- b) measuring the activity of said polypeptide in said test animal after administering the compound of step (a); and
- c) comparing the activity of said protein in said test animal with the activity of said polypeptide in a control animal not administered said polypeptide, wherein a change in the activity of said polypeptide in said test animal relative to said control animal indicates the test compound is a modulator of latency or predisposition to a pathology associated with the polypeptide of claim 1.

39. The method of claim 36, wherein said test animal is a recombinant test animal that expresses a test protein transgene or expresses said transgene under the control of a promoter at an increased level relative to a wild-type test animal, and wherein said promoter is not the native gene promoter of said transgene.

40. A method for determining the presence of or predisposition to a disease associated with altered levels of the polypeptide of claim 1 in a first mammalian subject, the method comprising:

a) measuring the level of expression of the polypeptide in a sample from the first mammalian subject; and

b) comparing the amount of said polypeptide in the sample of step (a) to the amount of the polypeptide present in a control sample from a second mammalian subject known not to have, or not to be predisposed to, said disease,

wherein an alteration in the expression level of the polypeptide in the first subject as compared to the control sample indicates the presence of or predisposition to said disease.

41. A method for determining the presence of or predisposition to a disease associated with altered levels of the nucleic acid molecule of claim 5 in a first mammalian subject, the method comprising:

a) measuring the amount of the nucleic acid in a sample from the first mammalian subject; and

b) comparing the amount of said nucleic acid in the sample of step (a) to the amount of the nucleic acid present in a control sample from a second mammalian subject known not to have or not be predisposed to, the disease;

wherein an alteration in the level of the nucleic acid in the first subject as compared to the control sample indicates the presence of or predisposition to the disease.

42. A method of treating a pathological state in a mammal, the method comprising administering to the mammal a polypeptide in an amount that is sufficient to alleviate the pathological state, wherein the polypeptide is a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 95% identical to a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequences given by SEQ ID NOS:2, 6, and 8, or a biologically active fragment thereof.

43. A method of treating a pathological state in a mammal, the method comprising administering to the mammal the antibody of claim 15 in an amount sufficient to alleviate the pathological state.